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S E R M O N

Preach'd at

B A T H,

On the DEATH of the late Reverend
BENNET STEVENSON, D. D.

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The Character and Blessedness of
those who die in the Lord.

Represented in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

B A T H,

April the 4th, 1756.

On Occasion of the much lamented

D E A T H

Of the late REVEREND

BENNET STEVENSON, D. D.

Who departed this Life, March the 23d.

Aged 74.

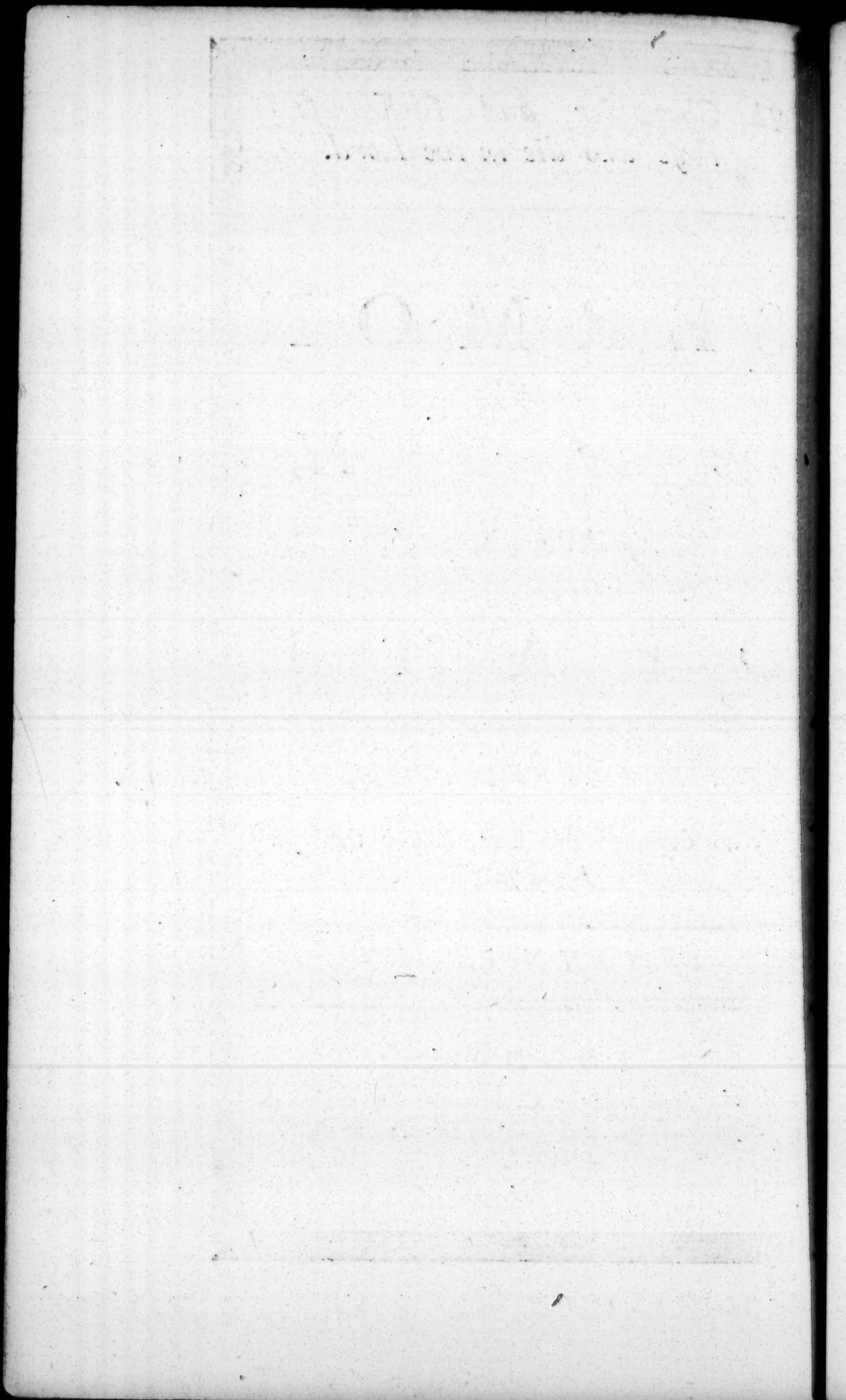
By JOHN FRANK.

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RE V. xiv. 13.

*And I heard a Voice from Heaven,
saying unto me, write, blessed are
the Dead which die in the Lord,
from henceforth; yea saith the
Spirit, that they may rest from
their Labors, and their Works do
follow them.*

UPON this melancholy Occasion, when we shall find it necessary to summon all the supports of Christianity to our Assistance, instead of aggravating our Distress, by representing the loss which we, as a private Society, and, indeed, the whole Church of Christ, have sustained in the removal of one of its brightest Ornaments, I am naturally led from my text to draw a veil over the gloomy scene, and to consider his removal from us as the Commencement of his exalted Bliss. —— Were I equal to the Task of doing justice to his lovely Character,

raefer, and of exhibiting to View the many great and amiable Accomplishments with which it was distinguished, and were I under no restraint by the modest Injunction of the deceased from paying this Tribute to his Memory, how distressing would be the Thought, to consider that so much Learning, such eminent Capacities of usefulness, such an enlightened Zeal, tempered with so pure a Flame of Charity ; in a word, such Candor in thinking, and such Prudence in conduct, are, now, to us no more. In him we have lost those excellent Qualifications, which enoble Human Nature, and were an Ornament to his Profession ; the learned Scholar, the accomplished Gentleman, the eloquent Divine, and what those, who knew him best, will be the first to acknowledge, the agreeable Companion, and the faithful and most affectionate Friend.— But here my Text comes in to our Assistance, teaching us to regard those amiable Qualities, the loss of which, we so justly lament, as the sources, of so many blessings to himself ; that they *follow*, or as the word may be translated, *accompany* him into the other World, and brighten the Splendor of his immortal

Crown.

Crown. *And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the Dead, who die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labors, and their Works do follow them.*

This Declaration is introduced with the greatest Solemnity, and in such a manner, as to engage the most serious attention of the Reader. *And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write.* It strikes the Mind at once, that there must be vast Importance in what the celestial Voice is to pronounce. And what can be of greater Moment, than to have the final issue of a religious Life so clearly ascertain'd? by which all doubt concerning the reality of a future state is happily removed ; and not only so, but the most pleasing assurances given us, that it will be a state of eternal Rest and Joy to all the faithful Servants of God, *to all that die in the Lord.* This expression may in a particular manner refer to those, who in the first Ages, suffered for the cause of Religion, and the Testimony of Jesus, and who sealed the Truth with their Blood. But All, may likewise be said to *die in the Lord*, who sincerely go through all the Labors and Services

Services of a religious course; who bear all the Trials of their Virtue and Integrity with firmness and constancy, and by a patient continuance in doing well, and suffering evil, persevere unto the end of Life. I propose therefore in discoursing farther from these words,

1st. More particularly to consider, what we are to understand by *dying in the Lord*, and who are entitled to that Character. And,

2dly. To represent the blessedness of their future condition; *they rest from their Labors, and their Works do follow them.*

1st. I am to consider what we are to understand by *dying in the Lord*, and who may be said to be entitled to that Character. This is an enquiry, in which we are nearly interested; for, surely, if it be of any importance to know, that all our labors shall end in death, and that every affliction of this mortal life shall in the future state be succeeded by the most perfect Felicity and Rest, it must be of equal importance to know how, or upon what conditions, this may be obtained: if ever the distant prospect of that happy and glorious state be pleasing and satisfactory to our Minds, it must

must be infinitely more so to be assured, that we are possessed of that Temper, and those Dispositions which are necessary to its Attainment.

Now that this Rest will not be the Lot of all, is evident from the Nature of Things, because the Wicked want that Temper and those Dispositions which are essentially necessary to the Enjoyment of it; they have no Relish for the Pleasures of Devotion, no Taste for the sublime Pursuits of religious Knowledge, and therefore an Admission into this State of Happiness and Rest, is with great Propriety promised only to those who die in the Lord.

Who then are those happy Persons who may be said to *die in the Lord?* Are all promiscuously who believe in Jesus, or who, under the Dispensation of the Gospel, have made an external Profession of their Faith in him,—are all such to be included under that amiable Character? Our Saviour hath particularly exposed the Vanity and Presumption of such a Plea: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the Will of my Father, who is in Heaven* *.

* Matt. vii. 21.

B

And,

And, certainly, if the Belief of Christianity itself, when defective in Point of Practice, will not entitle us to that Character, the Belief of no particular Branches of it, under the same moral Indispositions, can have that Effect. Nay, we are assured in the sacred Scriptures, that, if we have misimproved those external Advantages, which we enjoy as Christians, instead of their being Instruments of our future Happiness, they will prove the greatest Aggravations of our Guilt and Punishment.

By those then who *die in the Lord*, are meant such, and such only, however externally distinguished, who have improved their christian Privileges to the important Purposes of an holy Life ; who to their Belief in Christ, have joined a practical Imitation of him ; or who, under the Dispensation of the Gospel, have been careful to adorn their holy Profession by a suitable Conduct and Behaviour.—And oh ! how high doth our excellent Friend appear to stand amongst the most Illustrious of this Character ? How animated was his Devotion ? How active his Zeal ! How sincere his Faith ! Adorned with every Virtue of Humanity, and influencing every Action of his

his Life ? How great then must be his Reward ! But I forbear to enlarge upon this Head, lest I be thought to violate those Laws of Silence, which he hath imposed. I would only therefore observe, that as his great Modesty would not allow of any Encomiums to be made upon his Character, so I hope his Virtues will always stand too high in your Esteem, to render any Attempt of that Kind necessary to be made.

And now having shewn what we are to understand by *dying in the Lord*, I proceed to the second Thing I proposed ; viz. to represent the Blessedness of those who have made this happy Departure, leaving you to make the Application to our late excellent Friend as I go along. And here my Text informs us, that they *rest from their Labors*, and that *their Works do follow them*.

With regard to the first of these, I would observe, that by this *Rest*, an absolute Cessation of all kinds of Exercise, a Rest merely of Indolence and Sloth, is not intended ; for the Happiness of a rational Being necessarily consists in Action, the principal Ingredients which compose it, are the Pleasures of Intelligence ; the Pleasures of

Holiness ; the Pleasures of Friendship and Charity ; and the yet more exalted ones of divine Love and Gratitude : All active Virtues in themselves, and which it is probable, from their inseperable Connexion with the Happiness of the present Life, will constitute the supreme Felicity of the future State.

But then it is a *Rest* from all that is painful and uneasy in them ; a Rest from Trouble, from Persecution and Distress, from all the anxious Cares of Life, the Opposition of Enemies, the Slights of Friends, the Diseases of the Body ; in a Word, from every Thing, which hath a Tendency to disturb the Peace and Happiness of our Minds : All these shall perish with the present Scene : For, in the future World, they have no Admittance. Our Happiness, it is probable, will even then, as now, consist in Action ; but then these Actions, it is no less probable, will be divested of every, even the least Mixture and Degree of Pain ; this arising not so much from the Nature of the Thing itself, as from the present Constitution and Circumstances of our Beings ;

This,

This, in general, may suffice to give us a clear and satisfactory Idea of that *Rest*, which is reserved for those, *who die in the Lord*. But as there are several other things included under it, which have not been at all, or but slightly mentioned, I propose, before I proceed any farther, to point out a few of those amiable Properties of it, which constitute its supreme Excellence and Worth.

And the first Thing which I would mention, is this, that, in the future World, the Saints shall enjoy a perfect Rest from all the Difficulties attending the Pursuit of Knowledge ; I say, from all the Difficulties which attend it, but not from the Pursuit or Acquisition of the Thing itself : For, with whatever unfavourable Impressions these may inspire us against it under the present low and disadvantageous Circumstances of our Beings ; yet, still, its great Importance may be easily estimated, from that strong, insatiable Desire after it, which is implanted in our Natures, and from its inseperable Connexion with the true Dignity and Happiness of our Beings. Hear what *Solomon observes*, *Wisdom is the principal Thing, therefore get Wisdom, and with all*

all thy getting, get Understanding ; exalt her, and she shall promote thee, she shall bring thee to Honour when thou dost embrace her ; she shall give to thine Head an Ornament of Grace, a Crown of Glory shall she deliver to thee. And yet, with all these exalted Sentiments of its Importance and Value, he is obliged in another Place to confess, that much Study is a Weariness to the Flesh ; and be that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow †.*

But, in the future World, all these Difficulties shall be removed ; there the Soul shall enjoy a perfect Freedom from all those external Embarrassments and Interruptions, which are inseperable from the present Life : all its Capacities of Intelligence shall be enlarged ; whilst from its Converse with Angels, and immortal Spirits, it shall enjoy all that Satisfaction in its Enquiries, which in vain it sought for here. There, all its Perceptions shall be bright and clear, free from all Obscurity and Confusion, from every anxious Doubt, or uneasy Suspicion, whilst, it is probable, that our present Methods of investigating Truth, by the slow and tedious Deductions of Reason, will be

* Prov. iv. 7, 8, 9. † Eccl. xii. 12. i. 18.

exchanged

exchanged for those of Intuition, which in a Moment will unfold it to our View : In a Word, there our Knowledge will be equally improved in point of its Objects, as in the manner by which it is acquired ; for there we shall see God, not faintly, as now, by Reflection from his Works ; but Face to Face, free from all Disguises, and in all the Glory and Perfection of his Being ; for there, *we shall know, even as also we are known* *.

With these Improvements in its Capacities, with this Perfection and Ease in the manner of its Operations, how great must be the Exaltation and Happiness of that Being, who is thus unweariedly engaged in the Pursuit of Truth ! Let us dwell, for a Moment only, upon the Thought ; how great, I say, must be the Exaltation and Happiness of that Being, who, with perfected Faculties, and without any Interruption, is perpetually employed in the Pursuit of Truth, and that not only for a few Weeks, or Months, or Years, but for ever ! On this Supposition it is by no Means improbable, that even the highest Station,

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

which

which is now filled by the most exalted Angel, will be vastly short of his Elevation in the Scale of Being ; there being no Bounds to Infinity, and nothing to prevent his progressive Advancement in Knowledge and Happiness for ever. What a delightful Thought ! How full of Pleasure and Satisfaction !

But farther, another, and indeed a very important Property of this *Reft*, is its Freedom from all the Difficulties of Virtue and Religion. To enumerate particularly all these would be tedious and unnecessary ; I shall content myself therefore with observing in general, that what with the Attractions of external Things, the Sollicitations of the Body, the Influence and Power of corrupt Examples, and that inward Reluctance which we often feel to some particular Parts of Duty, it is difficult, extremely difficult, to support our Integrity, and to escape the Corruptions which are in the World ; hence even our christian Race is frequently compared to a Warfare, in which we are to encounter with a Variety of Opposition, and with a great many Difficulties, that we may approve our Fidelity,

lity, and like our glorious Master, might become perfect through Sufferings.

But in Heaven, the habitation and abode of Angels, nothing that defileth shall ever enter ; there we shall rest, for ever rest from all the sinful Vanities of Life, no uneasy Passions shall be suffered to disturb, nor any external Sollicitations to divide the pure and holy Affections of the Soul. Our great, and only Ambition, will then be, to be good, and to excel each other in the superior Holiness and Purity of our Lives ; for there our Perceptions of the divine Excellencies will be so bright and clear, as that it will be utterly impossible not to love him, and loving, not to reverence and obey him. Our Duty there will be our only Happiness, whilst the grateful Contemplation of his Works, the most exalted Enquiries after Truth, and our own Improvement in every worthy and generous Affection, will be our constant and delightful Employment throughout Eternity.

Again, the *Rest*, which is reserved for those who die *in the Lord*, is a Rest from Calumny and Slander ; which is another important Property of it. This is the

Source of infinite Disorder in the present Life ; it not only destroys our Reputation, but prevents our Usefulness, whilst it begets in the Minds of Men, a mutual Distrust and Jealousy of each other : Distractions in Families, disunion in Society, and that utter Alienation of Affection, which is the Bane of Friendship, are but a few only of those complicated Evils which attend it. And yet great, as these Evils may appear, or when minutely considered, however destructive of our common Happiness, yet such is the general Propensity of Mankind to censure and defame each other, that even the best of Men have been unable to escape the Effects of it. Thus was our Lord himself, thus were his worthy Apostles treated ; and thus every one must expect to be treated, who has the Resolution to oppose the Torrent of prevailing Impiety, or who dares in a World so full of Wickedness to be singularly good : For as our blessed Saviour hath observed, *if they have called the Master of the House, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his Household.**

* Matt. x. 25.

But

But blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord, for at Death they shall Rest from all these Evils ; this will open to their View another Life, quite new and beautiful ; will transport them to another world, all whose Inhabitants are of one Mind, of one Sentiment and Affection ; will introduce them to the most perfect Society of Beings, and confirm them beyond even a Possibility of the least Interruption, in the Possession of all the sacred Pleasures of the most intimate Union. Angels will seek their Friendship, and glorious Spirits caress them there.

Once more, those *who die in the Lord,* shall Rest from all the other Afflictions and Distresses to which they are incident in this Life; the great Importance, of which, in the Composition of their future Happiness will appear in the clearest Light, if it be set in Contrast with the various Distresses of the present Life, or if a few only of those Evils are considered, from which they shall then be delivered.

And here, were I only to confine myself to the single Consideration of the Body, its feeble Frame and Composition, the Disorders to which it is subject, their Variety, and yet in every View, how painful and distressing.

distressing, even this alone, would lead me beyond the Limits usually prescribed to a single Discourse. I would only therefore observe in general, that what with the Influence of this upon the Mind, the Crosses and Disappointments of external Things, the Sorrows arising from our Connexions with others, and the Instability of all our Enjoyments, our Situation here, with respect to Happiness, is always imperfect, and often afflictive and distressing.

*But blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord, for at Death they shall be entirely delivered from all these Sources of Trouble. When this earthly House of their Tabernacle shall be destroyed, they shall have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens *. Then they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the Sun light upon them, nor any Heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living Fountains of Waters, and God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor crying, for the former Things shall be passed away †. Their Bodies then*

* 2 Cor. v. 1. † Rev. vii. 16, 17. And again, xxi. 4.

divested

divested of all their Weaknesses shall be no longer an Incumbrance to the nobler Operations of their Minds ; no longer those sickly, gross, and perishable Machines they are at present, but active as the Light, free, beautiful, and lasting as their Souls. Their Connexions then with others, tho' greatly enlarged, shall be embittered with none of those displeasing Circumstances, which usually attend them here ; for there their Friendships, being founded upon the noblest Principles of Reason, shall endure for ever ; and having no remaining Affections but such as are founded in Virtue, whilst they see and know that all such are happy in proportion to their Capacities ; they shall feel no Uneasiness upon the Account of others, however nearly they were formerly related by the dear Ties of Nature and of Blood. In a Word, there all their Enjoyments being suited to their Natures, their Happiness shall be compleat, great as their Desires, and lasting as Eternity.

Give me leave to mention one other Property of this *Reft*, and that is, that it will be strictly eternal. What indeed is imported in Eternity, we cannot fully understand ; the Subject is much too grand,

too

too magnificent and extensive for our imperfect limited Capacities to comprehend ; when we endeavour to form any just Conception of it, we are soon lost in Wonder and Amazement. But then thus much we know, that even the longest Duration, of which we can form any Idea, bears no Proportion to it ; and that when Miriads of Ages are past and gone, our Happiness will be as far from knowing a Period as at the Beginning ; and in knowing this, we know every Thing which is necessary to our present Condition, necessary to inspire us with a supreme Love of God and Holiness, and necessary to remove and silence every Fear : For what can more effectually reconcile us to the Sufferings which we now endure, than the Assurance, that all these shall end in Death ; that in the future World they shall have no Admission ? Or when we are assured, that our short-lived temporary Virtues, under the Influence and Direction of infinite Wisdom, shall be crown'd with immortal Happiness, must we not necessarily entertain the most elevated Opinion of the inexhaustible Municience and Bounty of the great Creator ? In a Word, this Property of our future Rest,

Rest, is alone sufficient to support us under all the Pressures of the present Life, and to arm us with Resolution equal to its heaviest Trials.

I come now, in the second Place, to consider that other Part of their Blessedness which is mentioned in my Text ; they not only rest from their Labors, but their Works do follow them. The former of these, *viz.* Rest from Labor, you have seen every one shall enjoy, even the lowest Saint who shall have the honor of being admitted into the blessed World of Spirits, to the Presence of God and the Lamb : But the positive Rewards of the Virtuous in the future State, shall be proportioned to the Degrees of their Improvement in this. If they have *sown bountifully*, they shall *reap also bountifully*. If with greater Zeal they have applied themselves to the Study of the divine Perfections and Works, they shall then be admitted to a more intimate Knowledge and Communion with him ; and, if, having well improved their religious Advantages to the important Purposes of an holy Life, they have been careful to adorn their Natures with every useful Accomplishment, they shall then
also

also be proportionably more happy in their own Reflections. Not one good Action they perform, not a sincere Attempt to promote the Honor of God, or the Good of Men shall any ways lose its Reward. But the same Dispositions and Affections, the same Habits and Desires, which they contracted in this Life, shall attend them into the other World, where God who loveth Goodness, will reward every Instance of Improvement in it, with proportionably higher Expressions of his Favor, throughout eternal Ages.

This is a Doctrine very clearly taught in Scripture. Our Saviour evidently distinguishes between the Reward of a Prophet, and that of a merely righteous Man*. And St. Paul in the 15th Chapter of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, assures us, that the Saints, at the Resurrection, shall be advanced to as many different Degrees of Perfection and Happiness, as there are Stars in the Firmament of Heaven, which differ from each other in Glory; his Words are these, *There is one Glory of the Sun, another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars, for one Star differeth from*

* Matt. x. 41.

another

another Star in Glory ; so also is the Resurrection of the Dead. What a delightful thought ! and what an admirable Tendency hath it to reconcile us to the present afflictive Providence. We have lost a dear and excellent Pastor, a Parent, and a Friend. But consider Christians, that our Loss is his Gain ; that he is gone to receive the glorious Reward of his Labors, and that whilst we justly lament his Death upon our own Accounts, let us at the same Time comfort one another with this Thought, that he is entered into his eternal Rest, above the want of Pity, beyond the Reach of Pain. Recollect then with Pleasure his Labors of Love, and his faithful Services amongst you for near forty Years ; *Ye are his Witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly and unblameably he behaved himself, ye know how he exhorted ; and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a Father doth his Children) that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his Kingdom and Glory.* With what Propriety, and pleasing Self-consciousness might he have appealed unto you in the affecting and solemn Speech, which the great Apostle St. Paul addressed to

the Elders of the Church at Ephesus* ?
Ye know from the first Day that I came among you, after what manner I have been with you at all Seasons, serving the Lord with all Humility of Mind and with many Tears and Temptations ; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from House to House, testifying Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ ; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God. His Heart was in his Work ; it was the delightful Business of his Life to glorify his heavenly Father, and Honor the great Redeemer by promoting the Interests of pure and undefiled Religion, and the Good of immortal Souls ; and by an uniform Course of exemplary Piety, Holiness, Patience, and Charity, he approved himself to God, and to the Consciences of Men. Consider then his Labor of Love, his Fidelity and Zeal, and all the Virtues both of his religious and social Character, as the Sources of so many Blessings to himself ; and endeavour to express your grateful

* Acts xx. 18, &c.

Sense of his excellent Services, by testifying to the World that his Labors among you have not been in vain. And let your Conversation in all Things be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, that you may be his Joy and Crown of rejoicing in the great Day of the Lord.

His Regard for you, and Solicitude for your Happiness continued to the last. The Tenderness of conjugal Affection, the Bowels of the Father, and the Feelings of the parental Heart, and other Ties of Consanguinity did not limit the Benevolence of his Soul, or so engross his Thoughts, as to render him unmindful of you, or unconcerned for your Welfare. He hath left behind him a Letter to his Children, which he directed should not be delivered to them till after his Death. The Conclusion of it shews, how dear you were unto him, and as it contains a dying Admonition unto you, I have Permission to transcribe it for your Profit; for by it, he being dead, yet speaketh, " While I
 " am thus addressing myself to you, my
 " dear Children, my Thoughts suddenly
 " enlarge, and I am prompted to include
 " in that Title, the loving and beloved little

D 2 " Flock

" Flock to whom I have minister'd thro'
 " the Course of many Years, in the Gof-
 " pel of our Lord Jesus Christ; so many,
 " that a great Part of them may with
 " Propriety, come under the endearing
 " Denomination. What I have wrote
 " may possibly fall within the Notice* of
 " some of them, I take this Opportu-
 " nity of tendering to them my sincere
 " Thanks for all their uninterrupted Kind-
 " ness to me and mine, whereby my
 " Life and Labors have been rendered
 " comfortable among them. I have al-
 " ways had their spiritual Welfare near at
 " my Heart. Divisions will every Way
 " prove fatal to it, and especially in so
 " small a Society: Therefore my depart-
 " ing Prayer and Exhortation are in the
 " Words of the blessed Apostle, *Finally,*
 " *Brethren, farewell; be perfect, be of good*
 " *Comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace,*
 " *and the God of Love and Peace shall be*
 " *with you *.*"

Particularly let me exhort those of you who stood in a yet nearer Relation to him,

* Note. The Author knew nothing of the Paper above referred to, when the Sermon was preach'd, which was the Reason that it was not then deliver'd.

to moderate your Sorrow for him, by a Regard to his present Circumstances, mourn not, my dear Friends, as those without Hope, he is gone into a better World, and tho' removed from you for a little time, yet by the Practice of the same Virtues which so eminently adorned his Character, you may be assured of a future Introduction into his Company, when you shall commence an eternal Friendship with him, never to be seperated more, a Friendship liable to no Interruptions.

Especially my young Friends, as you would apply these comfortable Reflections to yourselves, let me exhort you to make this virtuous Improvement. You have lost a most tender and indulgent Parent, but let not his Counsels and Instructions be lost upon you ; treasure them up in your Hearts, and let them influence every Action of your Lives. The Eyes of the World are fixed upon you, and from you Men will naturally expect an Improvement proportionable to your great Advantages ; O let not their rational Expectations be disappointed ; but by your Advancement in all the Graces of the christian Temper, shew them that you are not unmindful of
the

the amiable Example which hath been always set you, nor unworthy the venerable Stock from whence you sprung.

And now my Brethren, permit me to bespeak your tender Sympathy, whilst I lament the greatness of my Loss, by the Death of your beloved Pastor. For a few Years, as a Son with the Father, I have served with him in the Gospel,—and a Father he was indeed, worthy of being honoured as the Guide of my Youth, whose Counsels were dictated equally by Wisdom and Affection.

A full Heart would willingly express its Veneration, its Love and Gratitude, for a thousand Virtues and friendly Actions. But though I am restrained from paying this grateful Tribute to his Memory, nothing can prevent or alter my Sense of the Respect and Love which I so justly owe to it.

And as I am now left alone in the Pastoral Office, I humbly trust in the Continuance of your favourable Indulgence and Candor toward me, and your fervent Prayers to the God of all Grace, that my poor, but sincere and honest Labors may be crown'd with Success; *that I may obtain*

*tain Mercy of the Lord to be found faithful,
and may at last finish my Course with Joy,
and the Ministry which I have received of the
Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace
of God.*

And let me exhort you to give your Attendance on the solemn Exercises of Religion ; forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, a manner, that must be discouraging to such as minister in sacred Things, and will prove very hurtful to yourselves. And bring into the Temple of God, Hearts prepared to receive the Truth in the Love of it; and above all, study to practice according to the Directions given you, and shew in your Lives that you have not received the Grace of God in vain ; but *grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, to which ye are called in one Body : Be of one Heart in those Matters which concern your Salvation ; and I pray God, that your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge, and in all Judgment ; that ye may approve Things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without Offence till the Day of Christ, being filled*

filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which
are by Jesus Christ, unto the Glory and Praise
of God: That so your Hearts may be esta-
blished unblameable in Holiness before God,
even our Father, at the Coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ with all his Saints.

F I N I S.

